

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANILA 07873 150007Z

ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

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FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5702

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 07873

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, RP

SUBJECT: COMELEC MEMBER PREDICTS CEBU ELECTION OUTCOME:

- 9 PB, 4 KBL

REF: MANILA 6818

1. SUMMARY: COMELEC COMMISSIONER YANEZA, WHO SUPERVISED CENTRAL VISAYAS ELECTION, TOLD EMBOFF MAY 11 THAT FOUR KBL CANDIDATES WILL BE ALLOWED TO WIN LEGISLATIVE SEATS, ALONGSIDE NINE PUSYON BISAYA CANDIDATES. HE SAID HE IS RESISTING MARCOS' CURRENT DESIRE TO HAVE ALL 13 KBL CANDIDATES WIN. SEVERAL LOCAL CEBU OFFICIALS WILL SHORTLY BE REPLACED. END SUMMARY

2. COMMISSIONER ON ELECTIONS VENANCIO YANEZA TOLD EMBOFF MAY 11 THAT INTERIM LEGISLATURE FINAL VOTE COUNT FOR REGION VII (CENTRAL VISAYAS) WILL SHOW NINE "OPPOSITION" PUSYON BISAYA (PB) AND FOUR GOVERNMENT KBL WINNERS. YANEZA "HANDLED" CENTRAL VISAYAS FOR COMELEC AFTER COMMISSIONER MADARANG WITHDREW FOR CONFLICT OF INTEREST. DESPITE FACT THAT PUBLISHED PARTIAL VOTE COUNT SHOWS ALL 13 PB CANDIDATES AHEAD BY AT LEAST 50,000 VOTES, YANEZA SAID THE FOUR KBL WINNERS WILL BE EDUARDO GULLAS (CEBU PROVINCE GOVERNOR), TONY CUENCO (SCION OF A ONCE-DOMINANT

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 MANILA 07873 150007Z

LOCAL FAMILY), RAMONITO DURANO (SCION OF A STILL-POWERFUL LOCAL FAMILY) AND EITHER OF TWO CANDIDATES FROM OUTLYING PROVINCES. LITO OSMENA, NEPHEW OF EXILED CEBU MAYOR AND 1969 PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE SERGIO OSMENA, JR., WILL DEFINITELY BE SCUTTLED, ALTHOUGH SO FAR HE IS PLACING SECOND IN KBL SLATE, JUST BEHIND GULLAS. VOTE COUNT WILL BE FORMALLY CONCLUDED AND ANNOUNCED MAY 13.

3. YANEZA SAID PRESIDENT MARCOS, WHO IS NOW TOURING THE VISAYAS BUT HAS NOT VISITED CEBU, HAS RECENTLY BEEN PERSUADED BY REGIONAL OLIGARCHS TO "JUNK" THE ENTIRE PB SLATE AND ALLOW A KBL SWEEP. HOWEVER, YANEZA CLAIMS TO HAVE BEEN "IN CONTROL" FOR THE PAST FIVE DAYS AND FEELS HIS OWN SOLUTION IS BETTER IN THE LONG RUN. YANEZA SAID HE HAS RESISTED MARCOS' REPEATED REQUESTS TO MEET WITH HIM (TO ORDER HIM TO CHANGE HIS OUTCOME) AND HOPES NOT TO HAVE TO OBEY UNTIL HE CAN ANNOUNCE RESULTS MAY 13.

4. ACCORDING TO YANEZA, GOP'S LONG-TERM STRATEGY HAS BEEN TO PREVENT EMERGENCE OF A CEBUANO OF NATIONAL STATURE WHO COULD GALVANIZE THE VAST CEBUANO-SPEAKING POPULATION THERE AND IN MINDANAO. (CEBUANO IS THE LARGEST LANGUAGE GROUP IN PHILIPPINES AND PREDOMINATES IN MINDANAO.) SUCH A LEADER MIGHT SOMEDAY UNSEAT MARCOS. HE FEELS GOP HAS ACHIEVED ITS GOAL BY ALLOWING PB UNKNOWNNS TO DEFEAT THE KBL PATCHWORK OF FEUDING CEBU OLIGARCHS. NEXT STEP, HE SAID, IS "MASSIVE REPLACEMENT" OF LOCAL OFFICIALS IN CEBU, NOTABLY GOVERNOR GULLAS (WHO MUST RESIGN TO TAKE IBP SEAT) AND CITY MAYOR BORRES. THEN GOP CAN UNDERTAKE LONG-DELAYED DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IN CEBU TO WIN LOCAL LOYALTY. COMELEC'S MADARANG, WHO SPONSORED PB, WILL NOT GET A LOCAL OFFICE; YANEZA SMILED THAT "HE WON THE BATTLE BUT LOST THE WAR." TOUSSAINT
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PAGE 03 MANILA 07873 150007Z

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